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Environmental Protection Agency**

**Remarks Prepared for Delivery
Pesticides/Organophosphate Announcement
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In 1993, this Administration went to Congress with a plan -- based on recommendations from the National Academy of Sciences -- to better protect our children from the risks of pesticide residues in the fruits and vegetables they eat. Three years later that plan -- the Food Quality Protection Act -- passed Congress unanimously and was signed into law by President Clinton.

Today -- after an extensive scientific review -- we are announcing the first major steps under this act that will safeguard our kids from two of the older and more widely used pesticides on the market. And that means greater protections for all of us.

When a family gathers around the kitchen table, they should know that the food is as safe as it can be for every family member -- from the youngest to the oldest. And that's what this Administration is guaranteeing.

Today we are announcing cancellation agreements and risk reduction strategies that will ban the use of the pesticide methyl parathion on all fruits and many vegetables. For another pesticide -- azinphos methyl -- these actions will provide for major reductions in its use on foods common in kids' diets -- like apples, peaches and pears.

Americans enjoy the safest food supply in the world. But we can make it safer yet. Our extensive scientific reviews show that the current allowable uses of these two pesticides -- part of a class called organophosphates -- fail to provide the extra measure of protection for children required by the Food Quality Protection Act. Today's technologies allow our farmers to use safer alternatives and safer approaches.

And I am pleased that the manufacturers of these two products have entered into these agreements to ensure that the risk reductions we are seeking can begin next spring.

Today we are also announcing a firm schedule to review the 37 other major organophosphates currently in use so we can be ready to take action by the end of next year to ensure our children are protected. We are also on a firm schedule to review the safety and health effects of other high-risk pesticides like atrazine, aldicarb and carbofuran, which are suspected to cause cancer and or other harmful health effects.

Even as we begin to take specific action on these chemicals, I am today challenging the manufacturers of these older pesticide products to voluntarily come forward with the kind of risk reduction strategies similar to those we are announcing today.

What's important here is that in developing these new risk standards, for the first time we used children -- not the average adult -- as the benchmark for setting safety.

Remember: Children are not little adults. Not only are their bodies still developing -- making them more susceptible to this potential chemical corruption -- but they tend to eat proportionately more of these foods than adults do, putting them at much greater risk.

But by setting standards based on the most vulnerable in our population, this Administration is ensuring a healthier diet for everyone.

We have worked closely with USDA in developing today's action and have received invaluable guidance from our advisory council. Today's actions are based on sound science performed in an open and clear process.

Today's announcement will not affect the ability of our nation's growers to produce the variety of food and the bountiful harvests we have come to expect from American agriculture. For many crops, safer pesticides already exist, and we will continue to work with the agricultural community to ensure a smooth transition to safer and cost-effective pest management tools.

The actions we are taking today evolve from the tough, new requirements of the Food Quality Protection Act and under no circumstance should be used to challenge the safety of our existing food supply, or even a particular fruit or vegetable. Over the next several years, the public can expect our review of pesticides to result in further modification to the uses of certain chemicals. The public should know that our action reflects our continuing efforts to ensure the safety of our food supply based on the most current scientific knowledge.

I want to emphasize that for children and adults alike, the benefits of a diet that includes fruit and vegetables far outweigh the risk of pesticides.

We often talk about the legacy each generation leaves for the generations to come. By ensuring the safety of the foods our children eat, we are helping create a healthier America now and for all the years to come.

And now I'm ready for your questions.